



Tasmania Police

Media Release



Date: 10 December 2008

Contact: Lisa Stingel
☎ 6230 2296

MR08361

Tasmania Police would like to acknowledge the concerns of Australian Greens Senator Bob Brown and the Tasmanian Wilderness Society in relation to yesterday's emergency response exercise Western Approach.

Acting Assistant Commissioner Steve Bonde has spoken to Senator Brown about his concerns that the scenario, based at Devonport Airport, involved a forest campaigner targeting the Wesley Vale mill.

Mr Bonde said Senator Brown and he were in agreement that forest activists in Tasmania have never used violence in their campaigns, and are committed to peaceful protests.

He says these training exercises are deliberately designed around the most unlikely scenario envisaged by Tasmania Police.

"We deliberately draw up a scenario unconnected with events in history, unconnected with current events, or what police expect in the future," he said.

"They are not based on police intelligence or threat assessments."

He says the aim is to put together an improbable scenario so as not to alarm the community, but allow the capabilities of the participating agencies and the coordination between them to be tested.

Western Approach involved a full police and emergency services response and included Tasmania Police Forward Command, Special Operations Group, Police Technical Unit, the Australian Federal Police Regional Rapid Deployment Team, negotiators, airport security committee, airport operators, and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

The drafting and management of Western Approach was the responsibility of Tasmania Police, with no input from the Minister for Police and Emergency Management or Federal Police.

Tasmania Police offers an apology to members of the Tasmanian community who have been offended by the scenario chosen for yesterday's exercise.

Acting Assistant Commissioner Bonde is unavailable for interview.